

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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Type of School: (Check all that apply) ☐ Elementary ☐ Middle ☒ High ☐ K-12 ☐ Other  
☐ Charter ☐ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Maryalice Todd

Official School Name: Southern High School

School Mailing Address:  
4400 Solomons Island Road  
Harwood, MD 20776-9504

County: Anne Arundel County State School Code Number\*: 4023

Telephone: (410) 867-7100 Fax: (410) 867-4153

Web site/URL: http://www.southernhigh.net E-mail: mtodd@aacps.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. Kevin Maxwell

District Name: Anne Arundel County Tel: (410) 222-5303

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Enrique M. Melendez

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
- |            |                     |
|------------|---------------------|
| 78         | Elementary schools  |
| 19         | Middle schools      |
| 0          | Junior high schools |
| 12         | High schools        |
| 10         | Other               |
| <b>119</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>        |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 10846

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 11398

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☐ Suburban  
☐ Small city or town in a rural area  
☒ Rural

4. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

3 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
K	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	9	183	157	340
2	0	0	0	10	152	134	286
3	0	0	0	11	132	128	260
4	0	0	0	12	135	136	271
5	0	0	0	Other	0	0	0
6	0	0	0				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							1157

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
1 % Asian  
15 % Black or African American  
2 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
82 % White  
0 % Two or more races  
100 % **Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 12 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	45
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	100
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	145
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	1204
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.120
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	12.043

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 2

Number of languages represented: 0

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14 %

Total number students who qualify: 167

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 10 %

Total Number of Students Served: 113

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>4</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>19</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>56</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>8</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>2</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>16</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>69</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>
Support staff	<u>22</u>	<u>6</u>
Total number	<u>108</u>	<u>8</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 17 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	93%	94%	93%	93%	93%
Daily teacher attendance	95%	93%	96%	96%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	18%	15%	10%	13%	19%
Student dropout rate	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%

Please provide all explanations below.

Student attendance patterns for all years are averaging 93-94%. Some students come from homes where school non-attendance is traditional. The agrarian and maritime heritage influences these families, whose previous generations were directed not by county policies, but by growing and spawning seasons. In the past five years, these families increasingly are encouraging their children to make the most of educational opportunities.

Another mitigating factor is the lack of public transportation. Southern's community covers 122 square miles, so students who miss the school bus have no recourse except family transportation. This impact is significant. All 1,157 students enrolled at Southern – except for one – ride a school bus. The five villages that comprise the high school district have pick-up times that start at 6:10 in the morning; when a teenager misses the bus, he/she returns home. By then, many parents have left for the daily commute to Washington, DC or to Baltimore.

These factors particularly impact students receiving Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS). Southern's number of FARMS students has doubled in the past five years as many low-income families find affordable housing in our area's trailer parks and rural market. These families have one or no car per household. FARMS students find themselves stranded in their remote areas for the school day.

Another facet of Southern's community culture is the practice of keeping children home when a child may be ill. Because of long commutes and lack of transportation, parents find stability and predictability in knowing that their child either will be in school all day or at home all day. Parents decide which choice works best for them that day.

To improve attendance, Southern has initiated several programs. The Regular School Team (RST) meets frequently to identify students with attendance issues and to develop plans for assistance. The RST makes referrals to outside agencies, such as *Project Attend*, a county court system program. The RST also counsels students and their families. Southern's Pupil Personnel Worker visits families at home to improve student attendance. The school nurse, a 15-year veteran at Southern, also has gained the trust of families and has educated them to handle health problems and to value school attendance. (Recently, Nurse Comly won Anne Arundel County Health Department's School Nurse of the Year award.)

Staff attendance reflects the trends of teachers at the end and the beginning of their careers. Our increasingly younger teachers need more time for maternity leave, and in 2006-07, Southern experienced an unusually high pregnancy rate among faculty. Additionally, among the aging staff, Southern notes more long-term illnesses and surgeries, as well as, absenteeism related to retirement preparation.

Faculty turnover rates are impacted by the trend in young hires, by the graying of the workforce, and by the cutbacks in teacher allotments in tough economic times. Younger teachers are affected by the cost-of-living in the DC metropolitan area. Southern's staff resides in a high cost-of-living region and young teachers find it difficult to find affordable housing in the city or suburb. AACPS's efforts to raise teacher salaries are mitigated by the county's decades-old *tax cap*, which prevents our providing competitive salaries comparable to those in neighboring Montgomery and Howard Counties. The older workforce comprises a significant

portion of our staff, and baby boomers are retiring in unprecedented numbers. The economy is directing school districts to reduce staffing allocations, and Southern has lost positions in these times. Last year, our allotment was cut by four positions, out of a faculty of 73. Another factor is spousal relocation. Anne Arundel County is home to Fort Meade, NSA, and other Defense-related industries. Southern High School, located in South County, is a neighbor to Andrews Air Force Base, the Pentagon, and Washington, D.C., all of which have high transitory populations.

Despite these circumstances, Southern has a high population of teachers who have chosen to work at this school for most of their careers. The staff flourishes in this school.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	290	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	41	%
Enrolled in a community college	43	%
Enrolled in vocational training	2	%
Found employment	10	%
Military service	3	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	1	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Since 1920, Southern High School, located in a rural area consisting of watermen, farmers and “Mom and Pop” businesses, is the smallest of the twelve comprehensive high schools in the county, serving the lower third of Anne Arundel County. Located 25 miles outside of Washington, D.C., the area has become increasingly populated with commuters working in D.C. and Baltimore.

Traditionally, Southern’s culture was typically agrarian and maritime, students were not encouraged to attend four-year colleges, but now a new set of expectations defines the area as families want their children to succeed in a 21st Century global economy with more students attending post-secondary education. This shift is represented in the current academic achievements, course selections and post-graduate pursuits of Southern students.

Our school’s mission states: "Southern, in partnership with the students, parents, and the community develops productive citizens and life-long learners who set high expectations and make responsible decisions to promote academic success. To ensure learning, educators collaborate, analyze data to assess student needs, and create positive relationships to promote a safe and supportive environment.”

High expectations have raised Maryland High School Assessment scores over the last five years. The percentage of test-takers scoring proficient in English increased from 68%-95% while math scores increased 63%-98%. This represents an increase of 27% in English and 35% in math. The number of African-American students achieving passing scores in English rose from 41% to 83%, a 42% increase.

Similarly, the number of students with passing scores in math rose from 33% to 94%, a 61% increase. A 30% gap between the passing rates of African-American and Caucasian students on the 2003-04 math assessment was reduced to just 3% in 2007–2008. A similar gap existed in 2003-04 on the English assessment and has been reduced to 10% in 2007-08. Southern focuses on student groups as well as on individuals and identifies needs. For example, our African-American students have guidance groups to discuss academic progress and college planning. Content teams also identify our student groups and carefully monitor progress.

Students receiving Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) also performed at high levels in 2007-08. Eighty-seven percent scored proficient in English and 95% in math. Special Education (SpEd) students received the highest scores in Anne Arundel County in English, Biology and Government. They also scored above the county average in Algebra. The teaming of master teachers (regular teachers and special educators) with data-identified students in need played a major role in student success. Diligent planning of the master schedule allows this.

Southern offers 24 Advanced Placement courses and 25 courses at the Honors level. The percentage of students in AP courses taking the AP exam increased from 68% in 2006-07 to 87% in 2007-08. In 2007-08, Southern had the highest increase of students taking the SAT in Anne Arundel County, 22% as compared to the previous year.

Student achievement is led by a talented faculty, including those with elementary, middle, and college-level experience. Since 2003, Southern’s faculty includes five Nationally Certified teachers, two AACPS Teachers of the Year and two AACPS Teachers of the Year finalists, one Maryland Teacher of the Year finalist, one Maryland P.E. Teacher of the Year, a Maryland Technology Teacher of the Year, and a Positive Coaching Alliance’s National Fellow.



The community is highly active. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) provides students in the academic middle with skills to prepare for four-year college eligibility. Community faith members worked with AVID to develop portfolios and build relationships through an award-winning mentoring program.

Southern's PTSO acknowledges twelve Students of the Month with a student/parent breakfast. Parents sponsor booster clubs for sports, music, art, drama and academic programs.

Southern's community Business Advisory Board (BAB) is developing the county's first high school Career and College Center at Southern. BAB sponsors the Freshmen Portfolio Project and Teacher of the Month Program, and it piloted Career First Steps, which teaches juniors the basics of workplace success.

*ArtQuest*, Southern's annual nationally sponsored professionally juried student art show has become a staple in the community, bringing together elementary, middle and high school artists. Southern has been a home base for the Anne Arundel County Gifted Visual Arts Enrichment Program since 2000. The Music Department collaborates with the Baltimore and Naval Academy Symphony Orchestras providing students the opportunity to perform side-by-side. Similarly, Southern teams with the middle and elementary schools leading to a cluster-wide performance.

Southern's Professional Internship Program is the county's strongest, most diversified program, partnering with NASA, engineers, environmental agencies, and more.

Vertical teaming is strong in our cluster schools. Principals meet monthly with the Director of School Performance to coordinate efforts to maximize the rigor. Vertical Teams recognize the need of students to be guided through the process of course selection as early as elementary school in order to reach AP classes in high school.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

In 2009, *Education Week* recognized Maryland's state educational system as number one in the nation. Following that announcement, Maryland was again recognized, this time by the College Board as top in Advanced Placement performance. Southern shows dramatic growth in the percentage of students passing the Maryland High School Assessments (HSA). State assessment results are reported as passing or not passing in four subject areas: English, Algebra, Biology and Government. English and Algebra measure our Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for state assessment results for No Child Left Behind purposes. The state test in math for AYP was Geometry for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. Algebra was the math test starting in the 2005-2006 school year. In math, the percentage of passing scores grew and moved from 63% (2003/04) to 98% (2007/08). In English, the percentage grew from 68% (2003/04) to 95% (2007/08). Both of the current pass rates are higher than the overall state rates of 84% in Algebra and 81% in English ([www.mdreportcard.org](http://www.mdreportcard.org)) and the county rates of 90% and 86%, respectively.

The pass rates for each student group (African-American, FARMS, and SpEd) have increased as well, and all student groups have pass rates higher than the state's pass rates. A 32% gap in the math pass rates of African-American and Caucasian students in 2003/04 decreased to just 3% by 2007/08. A similar gap in English has been reduced to 12%. In both Math and English, African-American students are identified by content teachers and counselors to improve skills needed to succeed.

Over the past five years, the FARMS population increased significantly and has nearly doubled. While the gap between FARMS and the general population initially widened, within one year this gap was reduced and now is lower than 10%.

Special Education continues to have the largest gap in pass rates on both tests, but the gap is narrowing. Southern's math pass rate for SpEd has increased from 33% (2003/04) to 76% (2007/08). The SpEd English pass rate for SpEd has increased from 24% (2003/04) to 63% (2007/08). Southern's SpEd pass rate surpasses the state's 50% for Algebra and 43% for English, as well as the county's 55% for Algebra and 51% for English. In addition, it is important to note our SpEd performance in Government in one year leapt from 58% last year to 75% this year. Comparable county rates increased from 39% to 50%, with Southern leading all twelve high schools with the highest pass rate. Biology scores for SpEd students were also first in the county. The Southern staff continues to develop strategies for closing the gap.

In Advanced Placement (AP) performance, Southern High School is one of only two schools in AACPS that saw an increase in the pass rate for students on the AP Exam moving up 7.5%. Our Advanced Placement participation has continued to increase. Southern has seen a significant growth in AP students and courses in the past five years along with an increase of enrolled AP students taking the test, growing from 68% to 87%.

### 2. Using Assessment Results:

All core subject areas formalize data collection and use the data to analyze student performance. Core teaching teams meet regularly, consult with SpEd co-teachers, discuss data (both formative and summative), assess strategies, and determine instructional needs.

HSA courses provide quarterly benchmarks to inform teachers and students. This year, Southern has implemented quarterly benchmarks for all AP courses, a first in the county. Teaching teams and individual teachers use the data to document student progress, inform students of their progress toward goals, identify

gaps in learning, and assess the need for re-teaching and strategy differentiation.

In Algebra, teachers correlate results from benchmark exams with formative and summative assessments. A web-based program, Achievement Series, allows teachers to analyze their classroom performance, as well as, individual student responses. County Coordinators provide the school with countywide performance results. Individual student's needs, student group needs, class needs, and instructional practices are constantly evaluated. Based on their findings, teachers invite students to study sessions each week that are tailored to the identified student needs.

In HSA content areas, benchmarks and unit assessments steer students to formalized tutorial sessions, offered on Thursday's. The departments extend specific invitations to students for individualized help and send a letter home to parents requesting their support.

In English, teachers of 9th and 10th graders conduct formative assessments of the day's outcomes. Teaching teams use assessments to identify areas of weakness and to determine what needs to be re-addressed and in what ways. Additionally, students graph their own progress daily to encourage self-direction.

All students in grades 9, 10 and 11 take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) which is paid for by the county. Southern uses the Summary of Answers and Skills (SOAS) report to analyze data. Department chairs of English, math, and guidance and an administrator are trained on its use and implementation. This assessment enables teachers to analyze weaknesses and strengths during department and content team meetings to improve instruction.

Additionally, the PSAT results from College Board provide lists of students who are identified as having potential for various AP classes. Letters are sent home inviting them and their parents to AP Information Night where individual AP programs are explained. Current AP students participate in this event.

To encourage improvement in AP scores, AP teachers use the AP Instructional Planning Reports to analyze scores. Teachers write reflections for each course on strengths, areas and ideas for improvement, group composition and program trends. Administrators observe teachers for implementation of ideas.

### **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

Delivery of test data is conducted by state and county agencies by publishing results in newspapers and on-line through agency websites ([www.mdreportcard.org](http://www.mdreportcard.org) and [www.mdk12.org/data](http://www.mdk12.org/data)) as well as through school system protocols. Concurrently, Southern High School transmits results among its stakeholders in a variety of ways. Staff receives this information at formal meetings, such as full-faculty and department meetings. Written communications are prepared and delivered to all school and community stakeholders as information becomes available. Southern provides parents and the community a bi-monthly newsletter. The Anne Arundel County Schools Public Information Office provides press releases and coordinates media interviews. The school principal speaks with the press to provide the community a clear understanding of assessment data. The principal and/or designee also attends various community meetings and shares assessment results with groups like the Ruritan's or Rotary.

Assessments are shared at various parent information meetings, including PTSO meetings, CAC meetings, PSAT night, College Night, Back to School, Ninth Grade Orientation Night and AP Potential Night. Connect-Ed, a system of mass communication via telephoned messages from the principal, informs parents of upcoming meetings to interpret various test results and to alert parents of report card distribution.

Student advisory group meetings (Alpha-homerooms) allow staff to work with students by grade level and interpret test results.

As a tool for families, SHS emails individual student's progress reports home. Depending on student need or parent request, reports may be communicated daily, weekly, or monthly. Reports may include assessment preparation performance of the individual.

#### **4. Sharing Success:**

The story of Southern's Maryland Blue Ribbon achievement is an important one, and one that is being shared throughout our community and school system. Just as we are sharing the news of the state award, we will employ all means available to share the national award's story, if we are fortunate enough to earn it.

For the community, we will showcase the courses, faculty, student work, and processes that it takes to earn a Blue Ribbon in an Open House for Southern's parents, businesses, residents, feeder schools, and local legislators. All schools in the county will be invited to the open house to learn about Southern's model.

The school will send home a letter to parents to inform them of the award and will provide pamphlets about the Blue Ribbon designation to members of the community at their civic meetings and in their faith centers. Currently, the roadside electronic marquee flashes banner announcements, citing the Blue Ribbon award.

Other in-school events allow Southern to tell the story: Senior Awards Assembly, National Honor Society Induction Ceremony, Honor Roll Assembly, Student of the Month Breakfasts, Business Advisory Board meetings, PTSO and CAC meetings, *ArtQuest*, Sports Banquet, and drama/musical productions. The school's website will detail the achievement. As Southern sends school profiles to colleges, employers, military recruiters, and other post-graduation programs, the Blue Ribbon story will become a part of the profile.

Within AACPS, Southern department chairs will share the story with colleagues from around the county. AACPS will publish the story via its webpage, in its daily e-digest to schools, and in coordination with local newspapers: *The Washington Post*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and Anne Arundel County's *The Capital*. AACPS will feature Southern and the Blue Ribbon Award in its television programming, Channel 96 (Comcast).

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

Instruction is delivered through collaboration among content teachers, vertical teams, and SpEd co-teachers. Also, technology continues to add to the instructor's resources: SHS has an LCD projector in every classroom as well as increasing numbers of DocuCameras, AirLiners, and interactive whiteboards in the school. The two Computer Labs provide indispensable resources, with computer banks in the Business Ed and Art Department also.

English implements the VSC (Voluntary State Curriculum) which is aligned with the former Core English Learning Goals. English offerings include reading courses through AP English Language and AP English Literature. To support struggling readers, supplementary reading interventions are offered to freshmen: Academic Expeditions, Corrective Reading, and the Wilson Reading Program. When 8th graders score at a Basic level on the Maryland State Assessment (MSA), they are placed in daily English-with-Reading classes when they enter high school. Ninth and tenth grade English teams meet with SpEd co-teachers to assess performance and to determine instructional strategies. All students are required to keep dialectical journals when reading novels, short stories, and essays. This Reader Response Theory reinforces close reading and real-world connection to a text. Seminar and Discussion Webs are used in classes; four-level grammar analysis, and literature circles all are effective tools.

Social Studies teachers employ techniques that meet students' varying modality strengths: visual, kinesthetic, auditory. For struggling readers, activities are built on small tasks, questioning skills, and comprehension assessment. Quizzes and tests mirror standardized testing situations, to build those skills. Students may retake quizzes and tests as the instructor determines the value. Social studies offer a wide variety of elective and AP courses with increasing AP enrollment. The increase in student AP participation is due to growing student confidence, teacher encouragement, and exemption of AP students from final exams when they sit for the AP test. The increase in AP high scores is due to increased review and preparation, comfort level of teachers with the courses, and staff development.

The Science Department supports the mission that all students have the opportunity to attain high levels of scientific literacy by offering a full complement of courses: biology, chemistry, and physics are offered at all levels, including AP. Specialized courses in marine biology, zoology, physiology, and forensics also are offered.

Each curriculum is enriched with labs, experiments, competitions, site work, field trips, and other active involvement by students. Students benefit through Cooperative Learning Groups, participation in an environmental world-wide program, the ENO Tree-Planting Program, interacting with guest speakers, dissections, and computer simulations. Students use technology common to science: DNA gel electrophoresis, bacteria transformation, spectrophotometers for light wave analysis, and molecular models.

The Mathematics curriculum enables all students to achieve mathematical proficiency by developing both conceptual and procedural proficiency. In our mathematics courses students learn to think and reason mathematically as well as model real world phenomena. Southern uses engaging, multi-representational strategies which allow students to investigate theoretical and real world mathematics verbally, numerically, symbolically and graphically while employing the use of technology. Students study Algebra I to Calculus III, including AP Statistics.

Southern has a philosophy of "whatever it takes" in order to meet the needs of students. Algebra and BC Calculus meet every day on the four-period block to provide the time for students to master the curriculum.

After school help sessions are provided before HSA and AP testing. College Algebra helps students prepare for the community college placement math test.

Spanish and French classes engage students using multiple modalities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing are applied in classroom settings and on-line. The website [www.classzone.com](http://www.classzone.com) accompanies the texts to give individualized help. DVDs and CDs reinforce listening skills, while periodicals – often supported with CDs – provide authenticity, as do visits to French and Spanish restaurants. Teachers use modified assessments as well as on-level and Pre-AP assessments in order to level performance.

Southern's Music Department employs the Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes for the Fine Arts as a framework for improving students' critical thinking. Students utilize written and verbal skills by making aesthetic decisions, analyzing the elements of music, and exploring creative expression in the arts. Music teachers use written, verbal, and performance practices to enhance the students' understanding of subject matter and to increase cultural and historical awareness. Courses range from general music to AP Music Theory.

Southern's Art Department is renowned locally and statewide for its student development. Individualized instruction, passionate teaching, progressive instructional practices including visual journaling, and community involvement nurture talents and high-level thinking in students. Over ten years, enrollment in art has increased 400%. Courses range from fundamentals to a variety of AP offerings.

#### **2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:**

This question is for elementary schools only

#### **2b. (Secondary Schools) English:**

Southern has created a reading culture to improve reading skills particularly for struggling readers, but also for students of all abilities. On a daily basis, all students read a self-selected novel for twenty minutes, with a brief follow-up journal entry or connection activity.

AACPS' English curriculum is aligned with Voluntary State Curriculum, which includes daily reading and writing strategies. Formative and summative assessments take place on a regular basis and are used to re-teach as well as to identify students who may need extra help.

Results from the MSA 8th grade reading scores direct the course placement for each student entering high school. Students reading on the Basic level are assigned an appropriate Reading Intervention class as well as a Daily Reading English class. English 10 is assessed at the State level for AYP purposes. Regular Benchmarks are administered and assessment results shared to improve instruction and learning. Students can choose from a number of English electives to include newspaper, yearbook and literary magazine. Competitions fuel student engagement. Southern's literary magazine claimed first place in 2008 and second place in 2007 from American Scholastic Press Association. Students in the Poetry Outloud contests and the Rotary Four-Way Speech contests placed well. SAT Prep classes are also a part of the curriculum.

In the English 9 curriculum, one unit blends reading *A Raisin in the Sun* with career research. Each ninth grader takes an extensive online career assessment, which yields career profiles and leads students to career and college exploration. Even struggling readers are motivated to study the profiles and engage in text online.

### **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

The Science curriculum embraces the school's mission that all students set high expectations and the county's science mission that all students must have the opportunity to attain high levels of scientific literacy. Southern offers a wide and diverse range of courses, as mentioned earlier.

We promote responsible decision-making by students and it forms the basis of our interest in environmental sciences. Over the last five years, Southern has offered coursework in environmental sciences and AP Environmental Science. Our pioneering teachers developed the curriculum for AACPS. Interest in these courses fuels our students' and staff's desire to implement a school-wide recycling program, energy conservation initiative, cross-curricular lesson planning, and work toward applying to be a Green School.

Additionally, we believe that learning science is an active process. We rely heavily on community partnerships to increase interest in science fields and to bring relevance to science curricula. We work with local greenhouses, AACPS' Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the University of Maryland BioLab, and Walter Reed Army Medical Center. These partnerships allow us to provide site visits, field studies, and internships that would have otherwise not been available to our students.

Most importantly, Southern Science is rooted in establishing high academic expectations. This is apparent by our AP science enrollment over the past five years. Enrollments have tripled, with nearly 100% of those students taking the AP exam. In addition, we maintain a steady increase in Biology HSA scores and see a marked increase in the scores of SpEd students, with this subgroup ranking the highest in Anne Arundel County.

### **4. Instructional Methods:**

Students have a variety of backgrounds and needs and Southern believes strongly in meeting the needs of all students. Before meeting the students, the high school gathers information to forecast needs the school must meet. MSA results, report cards, teacher and counselor input all contribute to the planning of instruction for students. Counselors schedule students into courses based on the gathered information. Teachers work with the data to design instruction for all students, especially in consideration of African-American and Special Education students.

Rigor starts with identifying strengths and weaknesses of students, individually and by groups. This is done by individual teachers and content teams. Collaboration and data analysis by teams provide effective strategies. For example, one teacher on the team may have higher scores for African-American students and is able to share with other teachers instructional practices. For example, an AVID teacher included African-American speakers in her programming. AVID also integrates appropriate differentiated tutorials for students in core classes. Additionally, all HSA-content area department chairs required teachers to monitor African-American achievement in their courses.

Challenging the teenage brain to work is another practice. For example, teachers use questioning techniques that require students to problem-solve, synthesize, use critical thinking, and make connections to their lives.

Student social preferences and attention spans also direct instructional practices. Students work individually, in pairs, and in groups. Activities during our 86-minute classes are segmented for various attention spans.

Instructional materials are chosen for their diversity. For example, in English 12, students read *The Kite Runner*, *The Life of Pi*, and in ninth grade, students study the poetry of Langston Hughes.

To help with instructional strategies, teachers provide in-services for each other. For example, Southern's art teacher developed visual journaling in his art program that contains journal writing as well as artistic creation. Students write about what inspires them. This visual journaling has spread excitement about writing to other departments and has given all departments another way for students to write in class. Another teacher worked with environmental lessons that could be included in all subject areas. This environmental focus is relevant to students understanding their futures. Teachers tie together curriculum and encourage interdepartmental reinforcement.

Southern's special education department is the touchstone of individualized instruction, but all good teaching differentiates according to student needs. With special education co-teaching, differentiation becomes the norm in many classes. Successful and strong team teachers are scheduled together consistently to provide the best instruction.

## **5. Professional Development:**

Southern's mission is to develop life-long learners; therefore, our staff models this process. Both collectively and individually, the staff continues to research and learn new techniques to provide students with current effective learning practices in education.

On a regular basis, teachers receive articles to read that focus on instructional practices. One practice, for example, is the use of word walls in the classroom, which posts vocabulary for easy student reference.

Faculty and department meetings are forums for discussing trends, data, best practices, and evaluation of achievement. A valuable resource, *PD360*, allows the principal and department chairs to access video segments on topics to use with their staff. For example, department chairs researched differentiation and used materials from *PD360* in team meetings.

Peer visitation, a professional development tool, allows teachers to observe best practices from classroom management to collaborative learning to team-teaching. Southern's teachers conduct a minimum of two visitations a year.

To build relationships and understand minority achievement, Southern's staff read and discussed Ruby Payne's *Understanding Poverty* over the course of an entire year.

Southern has conducted seminars on minority achievement, cultural proficiency, differentiated instruction, vertical teaming, reading and writing across the curriculum, and visual journaling. Workshops on up-to-date technology that supports instruction is critical. Staff attends workshops on SmartBoards, Airliner, and, in science, microphorisis and DNA equipment. A cluster-wide in-service held at Southern High with teachers from all feeder system schools offered over twenty workshops this past August with the focus on "Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships," the cluster's focus for professional development.

Outside of the school, teachers participate in College Board-sponsored AP and SAT training. These practices, then, are shared in department and content team meetings. Many teachers are enrolled in college courses and are pursuing National Board Certification, which translates into the classroom and among faculty.



## **6. School Leadership:**

The school is led by the principal, three assistant principals and an administrative intern and business manager. Department chairs are integral to the leadership team. Collaboration among the administrative team, department chairs, guidance, faculty, parents, students, and community stakeholders creates an environment and culture of high expectations and performance. Collaboration defines the leadership style and role of the principal.

The school's improvement team is based on the Project Management Oversight Committee (PMOC) concept where all teachers are part of one of four charters (Advanced Placement, High School Assessment, Motivation to Learn and Community Collaboration). These charters report back to the oversight team, consisting of the administrative team, major subject department chairs and parent representatives. Parents and students sit on the charter committees that meet once a month to discuss action steps needed for school improvement.

One step promoted by the PMOC to improve academic achievement, for example, was the development of benchmark exams for advanced placement classes. Benchmarks have proved vital to HSA achievement, but no benchmarks existed for AP. Southern developed its own AP benchmarks as a tool to improve scores on AP Exams.

The PMOC is supported by the central office of Anne Arundel County Public Schools. The principal works monthly with the Southern Performance Director and other cluster feeder principals to collaborate on many topics of interest including vertical teaming and the increasing rigor of our programs. This past August, Southern High School hosted the yearly professional development day for all feeder system teachers. Southern conducted twenty four seminars that teachers could choose to attend.

Curriculum coordinators are often asked to visit Southern to make suggestions on improving instruction. In turn, they bring others into the building to observe the Southern teachers model effective instruction.

High performance takes constant vigilance, and Southern's administrative team is dedicated to instructional support. Each assistant principal is assigned a set of academic departments to supervise based on the AP's personal familiarity with content. This allows the principal and APs, working with department chairs, to observe teachers on a regular basis and meet with them to discuss instructional strategies, student performance, goals, and needs. The principal receives the minutes of content and department meeting minutes to ensure implementation of best practices. Furthermore, all first-year and second-year teachers receive support and instruction from the school's Right Start advisor, a coach for new staff.

Southern's high-achieving faculty is the result of dedicated campaigns each year to hire the best of the county's applicants. The principal researches, finds, and hires exceptional staff, and creates a culture to retain them. Acknowledgment in faculty meetings, community and parent meetings, media, and in recognition programs stoke the fires of commitment to excellence.



## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 10

Test: Maryland High School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Maryland State Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Proficient	95	81	67	60	68
Not specified by State*	95	81	67	60	68
Number of students tested	260	305	328	287	300
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient	87	63	36	33	60
Not specified by State*	87	63	36	33	60
Number of students tested	37	38	31	27	15
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African-American</b>					
% Proficient	84	53	37	32	41
Not specified by State*	84	53	37	32	41
Number of students tested	36	40	51	50	46
<b>3. (specify subgroup): White</b>					
% Proficient	95	85	72	66	73
Not specified by State*	95	85	72	66	73
Number of students tested	223	257	271	232	249
<b>4. (specify subgroup): Special Education</b>					
% Proficient	63	37	30	21	24
Not specified by State*	63	37	30	21	24
Number of students tested	38	27	37	43	37

Notes:

Subject: **English** - Grade: **10**

\*Information on these tests and scores are reported at <http://mdreportcard.org/>. The Maryland State Department of Education reports only "percent proficient" on these tests, which are given as end-of-course assessments.

For school year 2003-2004, the state test was the **Maryland School Assessment: Grade 10 Reading**. For all years since the state test is **High School Assessment English 2**.

Source: <http://mdreportcard.org/>

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 9

Test: Maryland High School Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Maryland State Department of Education

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
% Proficient	98	84	76	58	63
Not specified by State*	98	84	76	58	63
Number of students tested	251	283	396	389	211
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
% Proficient	95	75	52	43	43
Not specified by State*	95	75	52	43	43
Number of students tested	37	41	63	30	14
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African-American</b>					
% Proficient	94	74	57	34	33
Not specified by State*	94	74	57	34	33
Number of students tested	35	27	63	67	18
<b>3. (specify subgroup): White</b>					
% Proficient	97	84	79	63	65
Not specified by State*	97	84	79	63	65
Number of students tested	219	249	323	314	190
<b>4. (specify subgroup): Special Education</b>					
% Proficient	77	58	39	30	33
Not specified by State*	77	58	39	30	33
Number of students tested	34	38	59	66	6

Notes:

Subject: **Mathematics** - Grade: *(n/a: test given in year course is taken)*

\*Information on these tests and scores are reported at <http://mdreportcard.org/>. The Maryland State Department of Education reports only "percent proficient" on these tests, which are given as end-of-course assessments.

For school years 2003-04 and 2004-05, the state test was the **Maryland School Assessment: Geometry**.

For more recent years, the state test is the **High School Assessment: Algebra**.

Source: <http://mdreportcard.org/>

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